

The key to fight opioids: money

Medical professionals and researchers say politicians' promises for solutions must be backed up with funding.

BY JUSTINE GRIFFIN
Times Staff Writer

The opioid epidemic has grabbed the spotlight of late, with state and national leaders promising action.

Gov. Rick Scott pledged in September to push for tighter prescription rules and budget \$50 million for treatment and beefed up law enforcement. A month later, President Donald Trump declared the epidemic a public health emergency and outlined some possible ways to fight addiction and make certain drugs less available.

But local advocates, medical professionals and researchers who work every day with those affected by opioid addiction are hesitant to celebrate until they see meaningful action.

"We certainly want to commend the governor that he's recognizing that he needs to make a larger commitment to combat this epidemic," said Anne Swerlick with the Florida Policy Institute in Tallahassee. "But both on the fiscal and policy side, the state has not opted to expand Medicaid, which would be leveraging millions of dollars to provide substance abuse programs for people in need."

She worries that much of the \$50 million Scott talked about would go to law enforcement, "which isn't the same as providing people coverage for programs that have been proven to help."

Scott's office says the money would go toward statewide drug treatment, counseling and the Florida Violent Crime and Drug Control Council, a program launched in 1993 to help local law enforcement agencies with violent crime or drug investigations.

The governor also plans to propose legislation that would limit opioid prescriptions to a three-day

» See OPIOIDS, 10A



MONICA HERNDON | Times

The choice of canned beer at Jug & Bottle Dept. Who brews all these beers?

Is success swallowing up craft beers?

Independent brewers say they're under siege by corporations, but some sell to expand their brand.

BY LAURA REILEY
Times Food Critic

It's a stunt, never going to happen. Every man, woman and child in the country would have to kick in \$659 and change to come up with the \$213 billion it would take to buy Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's largest brewer. Nonetheless, the Brewers Association, a trade group that promotes small and independent American brewers, has launched a campaign to do just that. It's to raise awareness that craft beer, and ergo craft beer enthusiasts, are secretly under siege.

The #TakeCraftBack campaign, which has raised more than \$3 million since mid-October, is drawing attention to the complicated ebb and flow of the beer world.

People are drinking less mass-market beer, period. Beer consumption dropped 20 percent in the last 35 years, according to Wells Fargo analysts. Millennials get blamed again: Their embrace of wine and cocktails is linked to a nearly 2 percent downturn in Big Beer sales just this year.

Craft beer, on the other hand, has enjoyed a major explosion. Take Tampa Bay alone, which has emerged as a "beercation" destination with more

» See BEER, 10A

the girl in the window 10 years later



LARA CERRI | Times

Bernie Lierow visits his daughter, Dani, to celebrate her 19th birthday Sept. 23 in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

No story in recent memory has been more popular with *Tampa Bay Times* readers than Lane DeGregory's "Girl in the Window."

Published in August 2008, the moving account chronicled the life of Dani, a child whose mother kept her locked in a filthy room, and the adoptive family who worked to overcome her feral beginnings. In the years since, DeGregory has written many other memorable stories, but she never let go of Dani. Like many of you, she wanted to know what became of the girl in the window. This morning, we welcome back *Floridian*, our signature brand showcasing the *Times*' finest storytelling. Several times a year we will give you a front-row seat for our best longform work. That starts today with "The Girl in the Window — 10 years later."



Emails dispute picture of Flynn as rogue actor

He discussed Russia with the transition team.

New York Times

WASHINGTON — When President Donald Trump fired his national security adviser, Michael Flynn, in February, White House officials portrayed him as a renegade who had acted independently in his discussions with a Russian official during the presidential transition and then lied to his colleagues about the interactions.

But emails among top transition officials, provided or described to the *New York Times*, suggest that Flynn was far from a rogue actor. In fact, the emails, coupled with interviews and court documents filed Friday, showed that Flynn was in close touch with other senior mem-

bers of the Trump transition team before and after he spoke with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, about U.S. sanctions against Russia.

While Trump has disparaged as a Democratic "hoax" any claims that he or his aides had unusual interactions with Russian officials, the records suggest that the Trump transition team was intensely focused on improving relations with Moscow and was willing to intervene to pursue that goal despite a request from the Obama administration that it not sow confusion about official U.S. policy before Trump took office.

» See FLYNN, 9A

NATION & WORLD

A narrow win for Senate tax plan

GOP senators, making changes late into the night, pass a \$1.5 trillion tax package. Take a closer look at what's in the bill. **7A**

LOCAL

Latvala offers texts as defense

Sen. Jack Latvala releases text messages to shed light on his relationship with the woman who accuses him of harassment. **1B**

LATITUDES

An Englishman in Tampa Bay

Sting and the Florida Orchestra play Saturday at the Mahaffey — an undoubtedly interesting pairing. **1L**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Warm day

8 a.m. 65° Noon 81° 4 p.m. 76° 8 p.m. 70°

0% chance of rain

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